

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

The "Corn Man" and the General

- Standard: I. Culture
II. Time, Continuity, and Change
III. People, Places, and Environments
IV. Individual Development and Identity
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
VIII. Science, Technology, and Society
IX. Global Connections
X. Civic Ideals and Practices
- Grade Level: 9–12 (comparisons and analysis, with homework & improvisations)
- Objectives: The student will:
- Describe the character and background of these two world leaders
 - Explain why Eisenhower warns of the "military industrial complex"
 - Represent either leader in "cold war" language
- Time: 1 class period
- Materials: Documents: **1960** *A Soviet View of World Events*
1961 *Dangers of the Military-Industrial Complex*
- Resources: *Quotes from President Eisenhower*
Quotes from Premier Khrushchev
- Materials: A Brown Loafer
Image: (for projection) of a Corn Field
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWiIYW_fBfY&feature=related (15:45)
http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/26/opinion/26iht-edtaubman_ed3_.html
<http://www.newstatesman.com/200010020025>
http://iconicphotos.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/nsapfs5_extr-jpg.jpeg?w=533&h=603
- Procedures:

Setting the Stage

Relations between the United States and the Soviet Union were still tense in the wake of the Sputnik crisis when Nikita Khrushchev emerged as Premier of the Soviet Union in 1958. But Khrushchev decided on a new leadership style and suggested that he and President Eisenhower exchange national visits and then meet in 1960 in Paris. Khrushchev came to the United States in 1959 and the story is told of him admonishing Iowan farmers for planting their corn too close together. As a result, the media started referring to him as the "Corn Man".

Just days before the two leaders were scheduled to arrive in Paris, the Soviets shot down an American high altitude U-2 spy plane. The Eisenhower Administration was forced to admit its covert operation, but Eisenhower refused to apologize and the Paris summit was cancelled. Khrushchev withdrew his invitation and Eisenhower never visited the USSR.

The Soviet Premier returned to the United States in September 1960 to address the United Nations General Assembly. He used that forum to express his disappointment and anger with American foreign policy—and with Eisenhower himself. A legend grew up around this speech: Did Khrushchev crudely bang his shoe on the podium in front of the world? In this lesson, students will be asked to research the incident. Khrushchev's shoe became a Cold War icon—even if no one is certain exactly where, or when, or if the incident ever happened at all.

Eisenhower left office just a few months later, with Cold War tension running higher than ever. While he was a lifelong military man, Eisenhower was also a moderate who grew concerned about the way confrontation with the USSR was changing the United States. In his 1961 farewell address, Eisenhower delivered a thoughtful warning about security and vigilance—a message that may still be relevant today.

Pre-Lesson

1. Assign students to research the story of Khrushchev and his shoe pounding as homework and, if they can find a picture of this event, to bring it to class for this lesson. Three websites are provided above for them to begin the search.

- http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/26/opinion/26iht-edtaubman_ed3_.html
- <http://www.newstatesman.com/200010020025>
- http://iconicphotos.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/nsapfs5_extr-jpg.jpeg?w=533&h=603

2. Prepare to project a picture of a cornfield on a screen in the room (http://www.equityenergyresources.com/image/corn_field.jpg or similar). Have the recording of Eisenhower's farewell address ready for listening (15:45) Have a brown shoe sitting on the front desk.

Lesson Day

- 1.** Ask students what they have found out about Premier Khrushchev and his shoe; ask for pictures as evidence. They will most likely come up with one of two: a picture of Khrushchev with a shoe on the desk and a picture of him waving a *different* shoe in the air.
- 2.** As the discussion winds down, distribute the document, *Dangers of the Military Industrial Complex*, and the resource, *Quotes from President Eisenhower*.
- 3.** Play the recording of the speech and ask students to follow along with the document. Ask them to note any terminology with a "cold war"-orientation on the *Quotes* sheet.
- 4.** Once they finish that part of the lesson, hand out the document, *A Soviet View of World Events*, and the resource, *Quotes from Premier Khrushchev*, and ask them to preview the speech quickly while they write down any cold war-terminology on Khrushchev's sheet.
- 5.** Reveal the projection of the cornfield. Ask for one volunteer to play President Eisenhower and another to be the "Corn Man". Have the two come forward and stand "in" the cornfield and hold a summit (1-2 minutes), using the demeanor (Tall, calm, good-natured Eisenhower; Short, emotional/angry Khrushchev) of each, as well as their cold war terminology. (*Note:* The students are allowed to look at their sheets.) It is possible a "Khrushchev" may want to bang the brown shoe in the corn field. See what happens.
- 6.** Others will now want to volunteer. Take as many "partners" as time will allow.
- 7.** In the last few minutes ask students to reflect on these two men and what support they offered to their countries through their words and actions. What policies are they representing? Why? Students may write on a separate piece of paper.
- 8.** Collect the reflection papers as they leave; the other sheets are for their notebooks.

Extension Activities:

- 1.** Use the Eisenhower and Khrushchev quotations as test questions, asking students to explain the content and context.
- 2.** Post the photos of Khrushchev that the students bring in and discuss the difference in truth and legend. Why do Americans like (or need) the legend?
- 3.** Use the quotations to have students draw representative cartoons of the ideas presented. ■